

Rodents Eat Wire Coverings

This is the time of year that rodents find their way into our homes and sheds. Alberta is the only province that does not have rats in Canada. Albertans can store their grain in wooden silos. Here in Nova Scotia, we need steel silos and much rodent control.

What we need to understand with regards to electrical is that if you see one rodent, you may have many electrical problems if you do not act quickly. The worst thing that can happen is the building can burn down if your breaker does not trip quickly. All electricians know that breakers do not trip as quickly as the old fashioned fuse. With the event of the new code in May which allows higher breaker amperage on residential wires, 20 amp on # 14 and 25 amp breakers on # 12 (yes the 25 amp breakers are now being sold), the rodent problem will be worse as a higher amperage breaker may arc more before tripping and ignite surrounding materials.

Experience has shown that the rodents never liked the old tar covered wire that was installed during the war years and up to the seventies. However they seem to like to chew the new PVC coatings we use today. They will gravitate to warm areas like behind baseboard heaters and above light boxes in the attic, or alas an electrical panel in high use with knockouts left open. That has caused many a major fire as their bodies shorted across panel connections.

One has to be diligent to immediately have an attack plan at the first sign of a rodent, before any electrical problems develop. Most electricians do not have the equipment to trace broken wires in walls and it is very costly to rewire a building once the walls are up.

I have used sticky rat traps, very expensive ones from Home Hardware (about \$7.00 a pair) to set out against walls to test for any unwanted visitors. Usually once you have heard them it is often too late as they have already done some chewing.

It pays to be rodent aware to prevent unnecessary electrical breakdown.

(This article courtesy of Mother's Treasures Electric, 902-384-2242)